

roller and one or more support rollers for discharging paper from a print head for drying ink and discharging the paper.

The alleged prior device described in the specification is relevant to the extent that a heated roller is positioned downstream of the print head. However, the heated roller is clearly separate from the discharge rollers that are positioned downstream of the heated roller. Thus, the prior devices described in the specification provide the upper and lower discharge rollers downstream of the heated rollers such that only the discharge rollers do not contact the printer surface of the paper until after the paper has been heated and the ink has dried.

The prior device as described in the specification provides no suggestion of providing a supporting roll to cooperate with a heating roller where the supporting rolls contact the paper to discharge the paper. The description in the specification also fails to disclose or suggest a heat conductive cylindrical portion with a rubber covering over the cylindrical portion and a heat generator disposed on the inner surface of the cylindrical portion of the discharge/heater roller.

As noted in the Action, Muranaka discloses a printing apparatus having a pair of feed rollers upstream of the printing head. In one embodiment of Muranaka, the rollers can be heated to remove moisture from the paper so that the static charge created on the sheet of paper by the rollers is uniformly distributed. In each of the embodiments of Muranaka, the feed rollers rub the surface of the paper to produce an electrostatic charge having a predetermined value to assist in the printing step. Muranaka specifically discloses that the heating is for producing a uniform electrostatic charge and removing moisture prior to the printing step. As noted in the Action, Muranaka provides no suggestion of heating the paper downstream of the printing head.

Claim 1 is specifically directed to an inkjet printer having a print head, a transfer unit for transferring paper towards the print head, a discharge and heating roller in contact with the side of the paper opposite the image formed by the print head for drying the ink and for discharging the paper, and one or more support rollers located above the discharge and heating roller for

discharging paper together with the discharge and heating roller. Claim 1 further recites the discharge and heating roller comprising a heat conductive cylindrical portion, a rubber covering on the cylindrical portion for generating friction during the discharging of the paper, and a heat generator disposed on the inner surface of the cylindrical portion. The combination of these cited patents provide no motivation or incentive to produce the claimed inkjet printer. Furthermore, the combination of these features are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record.

As noted in the Action, the prior device described in the specification includes a single heated roller downstream of the print head for heating and drying the ink prior to contacting with the discharge rollers. Thus, the heated rollers of the prior device separate from the discharge rollers and are positioned upstream of the discharge rollers a distance such that ink is dried before contacting the discharge rollers. The specification does not disclose the prior apparatus having a support roller cooperating with the heated roller or the heated roller having a rubber covering for generating friction during the discharging of the paper. The heated roller of the prior device described in the specification does not assist in discharging the paper and is separate and distinct from the discharge rollers.

Muranaka provides no motivation or incentive to modify the prior devices to include a paper discharge assembly comprising a heated roller and a support roller as claimed for drying the ink and for discharging the paper from the print head. The assembly of the claimed invention includes a supporting roll located above the discharge and heating roller for discharging the paper while the discharge and heating roller dries the ink on the paper. Muranaka is specifically directed to heating the paper upstream of the print head to remove moisture and to provide a more uniform distribution of the static charge before feeding the paper to the print head. Once the paper is printed by the print head of Muranaka, there is no need to apply the electrostatic charge to the paper and thus no need to remove the moisture to assist in

the uniform distribution of the electrostatic charge. Accordingly, Muranaka provides no motivation or incentive to heat the paper downstream of the print head. Moreover, Muranaka provides no motivation or incentive to modify the prior devices to provide a heating and discharge roller opposite the side of the image formed on the paper with one or more supporting rolls positioned above the discharge and heating roller for discharging paper from the print head.

The heating devices of the prior device described in the specification and the heating rollers of Muranaka are for unrelated purposes. Accordingly, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the device described in the specification according to Muranaka as suggested in the Action. Furthermore, even if one were to modify the alleged prior device according to Muranaka, the result would be heated rollers upstream of the print head and a single heated roller downstream of the print head. Therefore, the resulting device would not be the claimed invention recited in claim 1. In view of the deficiencies of the cited art, claim 1 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 2-5 are allowable as depending from an allowable base claim and for reciting additional features of the invention that are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. The cited art does not specifically disclose a discharge and heated roller close to the print head in combination with the supporting rolls for discharging the paper as in claim 2, an aluminum cylindrical portion for conducting heat as in claim 4, or the rubber formed on the surface of the roller being heat resistant as in claim 5 in combination with the features of claim 1. Richtsmeier et al. appears to be cited for disclosing a star wheel for directing paper downstream of a print zone. However, the star wheel of Richtsmeier et al. is a spring loaded device that rides along the surface of the printed paper. The star wheel of Richtsmeier et al. is not a support roll located above a discharge and heating roller for discharging paper while the heating and discharge roller dry the ink as in the claimed invention. Therefore, Richtsmeier et al. provides no motivation or incentive to provide a star wheel located above the claimed discharge and heating roller.